

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 11, 2009

Barack Obama
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We are writing to express our support for the continuation of federal policy endorsed by the previous two presidential administrations that limited the federal role in subsidizing beach nourishment projects.

Beach nourishment projects, which seek to maintain or enhance beaches by pumping offshore sand onto beaches, are temporary and parochial in nature and do not address the underlying coastal erosion problem many coastal communities face.¹ In fact, new beach nourishment actually increases coastal development and the consequent demand for beach nourishment.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has opposed spending federal taxpayer funds for beach nourishment activities, because, "Beach nourishment also has the unintended effect of spurring new development as it tends to create the perception that an area is now safe for building, putting life and property at unnecessary risk."

While Congress has appropriated billions for beach projects that have washed out to sea, many national infrastructure needs have been left unaddressed. According to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), there are at least 985 levees within its Levee Safety Program that are still at significant risk of failure because of flooding more than three years after Hurricane Katrina. These levees have a flood-level rating of less than 100 years, which means that within a 100-year time frame a flood is expected to overwhelm each of these levees.

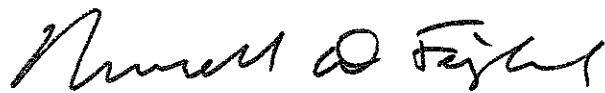
The Corps has also been inundated with a continuous stream of new congressionally authorized infrastructure projects, which has created a backlog of projects totaling more than \$80 billion, even though annual construction funding is less than \$3 billion. Consequently, many more important projects have stalled due to the misprioritization of federal funds.

¹ Assistant Secretary of the Army John Paul Woodley, Jr., Letter to Senator Tom Coburn, Department of the Army, Civil Works, March 10, 2008

We are writing to ask that you continue the precedent set by your two predecessors and prioritize limited federal infrastructure funds, including stimulus funds, for other shovel-ready national priorities – not beach nourishment.

Thank you for your service to our great country.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Tom H. Coleman in cursive script.Handwritten signature of Robert A. Fikert in cursive script.